

6 COMMENTARY ON MACAULAY'S
HISTORY

chapter or two, to glide imperceptibly into the
full current
of my narrative. I am more and more in love
with the
subject. I really think that posterity will not
willingly let
my book die.¹

In February 1839, Macaulay returned to
England, be-
came Secretary at War, and was admitted to
Lord Mel-
bourne's cabinet in the following September.
The History
which he had begun on March 9, 1839, ' with
a sketch of
the early revolutions of England', had to be
suspended.
It was therefore with a sense of relief that he
welcomed the
general election of July 1841, although he lost
office and
income in consequence of it.

I own that I am quite delighted with our
prospects. A
strong opposition is the very thing that I
wanted. I shall
be heartily glad if it lasts till I can finish a
History of Eng-
land, from the Revolution to the accession of
the House of
Hanover. Then I shall be willing to go in again
for a few
years.²

At last, towards the close of 1841, he was
able to con-
centrate on the work of his life.

I have at last begun my historical labours ; I
can hardly
say with how much interest and delight. I
really do not
think that there is in our literature so great a
void as that
which I am trying to supply. English history,
from 1688
to the French Revolution, is even to educated
people al-
most a terra incognita. I will venture to say
that it is

quite an even chance whether even such a
man as Empson,
or Senior, can repeat accurately the names
of the Prime
Ministers of that time in order. The
materials for an
amusing narrative are immense. I shall not
be satisfied
unless I produce something which shall for
a few days

¹ Ibid. p. 36.

² Letter to Ellis, July 12, 1841. Ibid. p. 93.